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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN TIES

1. Summary: All the major Chinese-language newspapers in Taiwan focused their front-page news coverage May 26 on local politics, with one significant exception: the pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, reported on the United States and cross-Strait relations on its front page May 26. The "Liberty Times" ran the headline on its front page: "United States is concerned that [PFP Chairman James] Soong and [Chinese President] Hu's 'two sides of the Strait, one China' [concept] will jeopardize Taiwan." The sub-headline added: "[Presidential Office Secretary-General] Yu Shyi-kun was kindly reminded by [U.S. officials] during his U.S. trip that [the 'two sides of the Strait, one China' concept] will easily mislead the international community to believe that China has shown goodwill gestures [to Taiwan]. Taiwan needs to think of a way to address the issue."

2. All the major Chinese-language Taipei dailies ran on their inside pages news stories on the U.S.-Taiwan arms deals. The centrist "China Times" spent almost all of its page four reporting on the issue; the news stories included U.S. Congressman Robert Andrews' remarks Tuesday that, to his knowledge, the United States does not have a deadline regarding the U.S. arms procurement package to Taiwan; President Chen's call on the Taiwan people to support the arms procurement package; and the roles of Taiwan's military, the Pan-Blue Camp and the Pan-Green Camp behind the arms procurement politics. Taiwan correspondent for the "Jane's Defense Weekly," Wendell Minnick, said in a commentary in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" that given the weaponry list that Taiwan plans to buy from the United States, China will easily defeat Taiwan should a war break out in the Taiwan Strait. The limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News," on the other hand, ignored the arms sale issue but urged Washington to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) with Taiwan immediately in order to thwart China's plan to use FTAs as a platform to isolate and boycott Taiwan. End summary.

#### A) "Taiwan's Military Will Fire Blanks"

Wendell Minnick, Taiwan correspondent of the "Jane's Defense Weekly," commented in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (5/25):

"What kind of military busy 150 guns and only 120 bullets? Taiwan's military, of course.

"Taiwan's air force has enough munitions to last only two days in a war with China. .

"US military sources say Taiwan needs a minimum of 350 AMRAAMs, 160 Harpoons, 75 Mavericks, and 3,000 Sidewinders to sustain it long enough for US military forces to arrive to help defend Taiwan.

"The minimum amount of time it would take the US to respond is five days, but some estimates predict that Washington would debate the issue for as long as two weeks before committing forces to Taiwan's defense.

"Why buy only 120 [AMRAAMs]? How long will those last in a war? Less than a day! That quantity is not operationally useful. Taiwan has to take their defense seriously, instead of just buying hi-tech weapons for their leaders' prestige. They purchase a fire truck and don't buy hoses," one discouraged US defense official said. .

"Now China's strategy is to force a quick military and political capitulation during timelines that have shortened over the past five years. Taiwan needs a viable 'force in being.' There will be no time for an emergency delivery of AMRAAMs or Sidewinders. It would be a 'come as you are' war. .

".Taiwan also needs additional ALE-50 towed radar

decoys. Taiwan has refused to procure an operationally useful number of these decoys. To date they have ordered less decoys than would last one full day if a war started.

"Taiwan needs two launcher controllers per 150 F-16s (300 in total). . Taiwan has purchased less than 5 percent of that number of decoys, and only 56 of the launcher controllers. . A ministry report released last year concluded that Taiwan's air force would be `destroyed in a few days.' .

"What does all of this mean in a war with China? China will rape Taiwan."

B) "U.S. Should Act to Thwart PRC Move to Isolate Taiwan"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (5/26):

". [L]urking behind China's passion for signing bilateral FTAs [i.e. free trade agreements] is a politically motivated plot that cannot be ignored. .

"In fact, the PRC aims to use the legendary attraction of the `huge China market' to suck its neighboring economies into a bottomless black hole and at the same time realize its substantial political strategic objective of isolating Taiwan. .

"Given the evident drive by Beijing to use bilateral or multilateral FTAs to isolate Taiwan, we urge Washington to consider its own fundamental geopolitical strategy as well as economic interests and rapidly conclude the ongoing talks with Taiwan and sign a bilateral FTA with our country.

"Such a breakthrough would open the doors for other countries, such as Japan, to sign FTAs with Taiwan and thus thwart the PRC's plan to use FTAs as a platform to isolate and boycott Taiwan.

"If the U.S. genuinely opposes any unilateral changes in the current status quo and balance in the Taiwan Strait, it must allow Taiwan to maintain its attractiveness as a global and regional trading partner.

"Only by ensuring Taiwan's continued economic prosperity and vitality can the status quo in the Taiwan Strait be stabilized."

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